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INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/IHB
HHS FOR OGHA
EAP/MTS ? MCOPPOLA
NEW DELHI FOR JEHRENDREICH
BANGKOK FOR REO HOWARD

E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: SINGAPORE: SEVEN H1N1 CASES CONFIRMED, AMCIT
RECOVERED

REF: SINGAPORE 495

11. (SBU) Summary: Singapore has seven confirmed cases of H1N1 Influenza as of June 1. Three of the early cases, including an active member of the U.S. military, recovered and have been released from the hospital. Six of the seven cases were contracted during travel to the United States. MFA has notified Embassy of 23 American citizens quarantined since May 27 due to close contact (airplane seating) with confirmed H1N1 cases, but many have already been released. Six university students were released from quarantine early June 2, but two other American citizens remain at GOS expense at a temporary quarantine facility. Several others remain under home quarantine orders. The Ministry of Health (MOH) intends to work with the Genome Institute of Singapore to map the H1N1 virus genome and study the behavior of the virus. Thermal scanning continues at air, sea and land border checkpoints and healthcare facilities, but MOH may decide to relax some containment measures such as contact tracing if the virus weakens. End Summary.

Seven Confirmed Cases as of June 1

12. (U) The Singapore Ministry of Health (MOH) has confirmed seven cases of H1N1 Influenza as of 1900 on June 1, after identifying its first case on May 26 (reftel). Six of the seven had returned from recent travel in the United States, while the seventh returned from travel to the Philippines. All seven have had relatively mild symptoms and three patients have been released from the Communicable Disease Center at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) where they were held in quarantine. The Singapore Ministry of Health (MOH) has urged passengers that were sitting in specific rows on the same flights as confirmed cases to come forward for medical evaluation. MOH has investigated 60 suspect cases and found seven with H1N1; ten that tested positive for typical seasonal flu; and 43 cases that tested negative for Influenza A. MOH continues to conduct contact tracing and quarantine those with close contact with a confirmed H1N1 case.

Active Duty Member of U.S. Military Infected

13. (SBU) A 28-year old American woman, an active duty member of the U.S. military assigned to COMLOGWESTPAC in Sembawang port, was among the first three confirmed H1N1 cases after being diagnosed with the virus on May 28 following travel to California and Hawaii. She was quarantined at TTSH following her diagnosis, but was released from the hospital May 31 after testing free of the H1N1 virus. According to military contacts at Sembawang, three other U.S. military personnel that had close contact with the servicewoman are in home quarantine mandated by the MOH. None has shown symptoms of H1N1 and could be released June 3. At least ten other Americans are currently under quarantine, either at the Aloha Chalets temporary quarantine facility, or at home or hotels. Six New York University students who had been seated next to Singapore's first H1N1 case on a flight from New York were released from quarantine June 2.

Quarantine Enforcement and Accommodations Spotty

14. (SBU) Amcits under home quarantine orders (HQO) have reported varying levels of enforcement and services. Some had cameras installed in their homes to monitor their stay, while others are simply phoned daily to check on their compliance. Some were told to call MOH if they needed food delivery (those at Sembawang have received three meals daily from MOH) but others were told to have

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friends deliver food to their doorstep. One hotel quarantine case was told to order room service at GOS expense but was also authorized to leave her room to obtain food if room service was not available.

15. (SBU) Americans quarantined at GOS expense at Aloha Chalets - hostel-quality accommodations - complained of insects in their rooms, small and inappropriate food portions, and a lack of television, snacks, international phone calling capability, and perhaps most importantly, a lack of information. Embassy consular section provided all Amcits quarantined at Aloha Chalets with hotline contact information for MOH and a direct number for the management of Aloha Chalets to address their concerns. On May 29, Embassy provided books and magazines to each quarantined Amcit. Aloha management has also provided laptops with wireless Internet connectivity and improved food portions. Currently, two American citizens remain under quarantine in Aloha Chalets.

MOH Anticipates More Cases in Singapore

16. (U) Anticipating more cases of H1N1 Influenza in Singapore, MOH has opened a second wing at the Communicable Disease Center at TTSH to accommodate any additional patients. MOH provided free flu shots to approximately 600 private physicians and clinic assistants in order to protect them against seasonal influenza strains. It was a one-time gesture of "goodwill" to healthcare workers on the "front line," according to press reports that indicated most physicians typically vaccinate themselves and their staff. The vaccines will not protect against H1N1, but will help reduce incidence of other flu infections which could obscure a wider outbreak of H1N1.

MOH and Genome Institute Study

17. (U) Minister of Health KHAU Boon Wan said in a May 29 press interview that the Ministry will work with the

Genome Institute of Singapore to study H1N1 samples and map the virus genome. The objectives of the study will be to ascertain whether the virus in Singapore is identical to what is spreading in other areas; determine whether the virus is mutating; and if it is mutating to determine whether it is weakening or becoming more lethal. If the study shows that the virus is weakening and has self-limiting properties like other seasonal-flu strains, MOH may consider relaxing some of the current containment measures in place, such as contact tracing.

SHIELDS